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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3527  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5718  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3433  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3297  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3961  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3941

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001229

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN; DRL; PRM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/28/2019

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [SOCI](#) [PREF](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: REF/RL JOURNALIST'S FAMILY  
CONTINUES TO FACE DIFFICULTIES IN LEBAP

REF: ASHGABAT 0297

Classified By: Charge Sylvia Reed Curran, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) On September 23, poloff met with RFE/RL journalist Osman Hallyev at his home about 15 miles outside of Turkmenabat in eastern Lebap Province. Hallyev said he had faced no new pressure from the authorities since March, the only incident occurring during a visit to Turkmenabat by President Berdimuhamedov for a Council of Elders meeting in early March. During the entire day of that visit, Hallyev was detained at a police station in Turkmenabat, although he was not placed in a cell and had free use of his mobile phone. Ongoing pressure continues, however, as several family members remain unable to find work after having been dismissed due to his RFE/RL reporting (reftel). Hallyev's brother, who lost his job as a policeman, had his application for work turned down at Chinese and Turkish construction projects, where applications are reviewed by a Ministry of National Security (MNB) official. Also, Hallyev's 27-year old son Umit is not able to either continue his studies or find a job. On the positive side, Hallyev's daughter and sister, both teachers, had their contracts renewed for the current school year, after having previously been warned that they would lose their jobs.

12. (C) Concerning his RFE/RL reporting, Hallyev delivers 15-20 reports per month. Most of the reports deal with everyday subjects in the lives of people in his area, for example, delayed payment of salaries and progress of the cotton harvest. Sometimes he travels within Lebap Province in his car, interviewing people and finding information for reports. He still buys multiple SIM cards each month, with his son sending the new telephone numbers to Prague via email. The MNB is not capable of screening all outgoing emails quickly enough to discover the phone numbers and block them. (NOTE: A mobile phone number that he gave poloff earlier this year is blocked. END NOTE.) During poloff's visit, Hallyev received a call from RFE/RL and spent ten minutes dictating his latest reports. Hallyev earns about \$600-700 per month from his RFE/RL reports, which he uses to support his extended family. Since he is not salaried, Hallyev needs to prepare about 20 reports per month and receives \$40 for each 3-4 minute report.

13. (C) Hallyev's family is able to listen to crystal clear RFE/RL broadcasts through a small digital satellite dish connected to their television. Most people are not aware that the broadcasts are available via satellite dish. The workman who came to install the dish told Hallyev's family that he could make the necessary adjustments if they wanted it. Hallyev said few people in Lebak Province's rural areas listen to RFE/RL because they do not have much education and do not find it interesting. He thought perhaps there are more listeners in urban areas.

14. (C) COMMENT: Although Hallyev's family still faces difficulties as a result of his reporting, he no longer expressed interest in resettlement for his entire family, as he had done previously (reftel). Government pressure has eased somewhat during the past six months and his mood was much more positive. Also, it was clear that without government permission to leave, which is doubtful that he would obtain, completing the process for resettlement would be a difficult and ultimately pointless exercise. He did ask, however, for assistance for his son Umit, who Hallyev felt could reach Kyrgyzstan without difficulty and could apply to UNHCR there. END COMMENT.  
CURRAN